

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2003

The Honorable Duncan Hunter
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20525

The Honorable Chris Smith
Chairman
House Veterans' Affairs Committee
335 Cannon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael Bilirakis
Vice Chairman
House Veterans' Affairs Committee
335 Cannon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bob Filner
2428 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Conferees:

As you are preparing the FY04 Defense Authorization conference report, we urge you to end the Disabled Veterans Tax (formerly referred to as Concurrent Receipt) placed upon military retirees who are also eligible for VA disability pay.

As you know, retired members of the armed forces who have a service-connected disability see their military retirement pay reduced by the amount of compensation they receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Military retirees are the only federal employees subject to this offset and are essentially funding their own disability benefits. It is time to lift this unfair tax on disabled veterans and provide full compensation to all eligible military retirees.

Even though last year both the House and Senate included the elimination of the Disabled Veterans Tax in their FY03 Defense Authorization bills, conferees abandoned the effort to end the Disabled Veterans Tax and instead provided for a limited "special pay" for retirees with at least 60% disability resulting from a narrowly defined "combat-related" injury and retirees with a 10% or greater disability resulting from an injury for which the retiree was awarded a Purple Heart. Sadly, this compromise will compensate only an estimated 35,000 of the nearly 700,000 retirees burdened by this unfair tax. This "special pay" is a mere shadow of what these disabled veterans deserve and what eliminating the Disabled Veterans Tax would provide. We urge you to take this opportunity to fully right this wrong.

Section 644 of the Senate amendment to H.R. 1588 provides for the elimination of the Disabled Veterans Tax and permits retired members of the armed forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both military retirement pay and disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs. We are calling on you to include this language in the final conference report.


For the last 17 years, legislation eliminating the Disabled Veterans Tax has been introduced in the House. Current legislation, H.R. 303, has 354 bipartisan cosponsors. You as conferees have an opportunity to finally provide relief to disabled military retirees and lift an undue burden on a more than deserving group.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this very important issue, and we stand ready to work with you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Jed Strickland

Nancy Pelosi


Rosa L. DeLauro

Kare Evans

Michael H. Michael

Jim Marshall
Steve Israel

Shelley Berspley

Jim Langerin

Madeline J. Readall

Corine Brown

Mike McEntyre

Bob Filner

Tim Ryan

Sharon Hovley

Ken V. Buttz

C.A. Delch. Pappasbapt

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Chris Van Hollen	Anna C. Davis
Tom Lantos	John B. Jann
Maurice Hinchey	Gregory Paypacher
Samuel W. Biele	John Smith
Jimmy J. Cotter	Ruben Hinojosa
John P. Ory	Jane Parr.
Gene Taylor	Phil Rahall
John A. Rhee	Carolyn B. Maloney
John Oberstar	Bro. Cannon
Mr. Fann	Benny Frank
Robert Menendez	James
George W. Miller	Cole E. Gildes
Ally H. H. H.	Chet Edwards
Maxine Waters	John Schak

Levi Carson

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